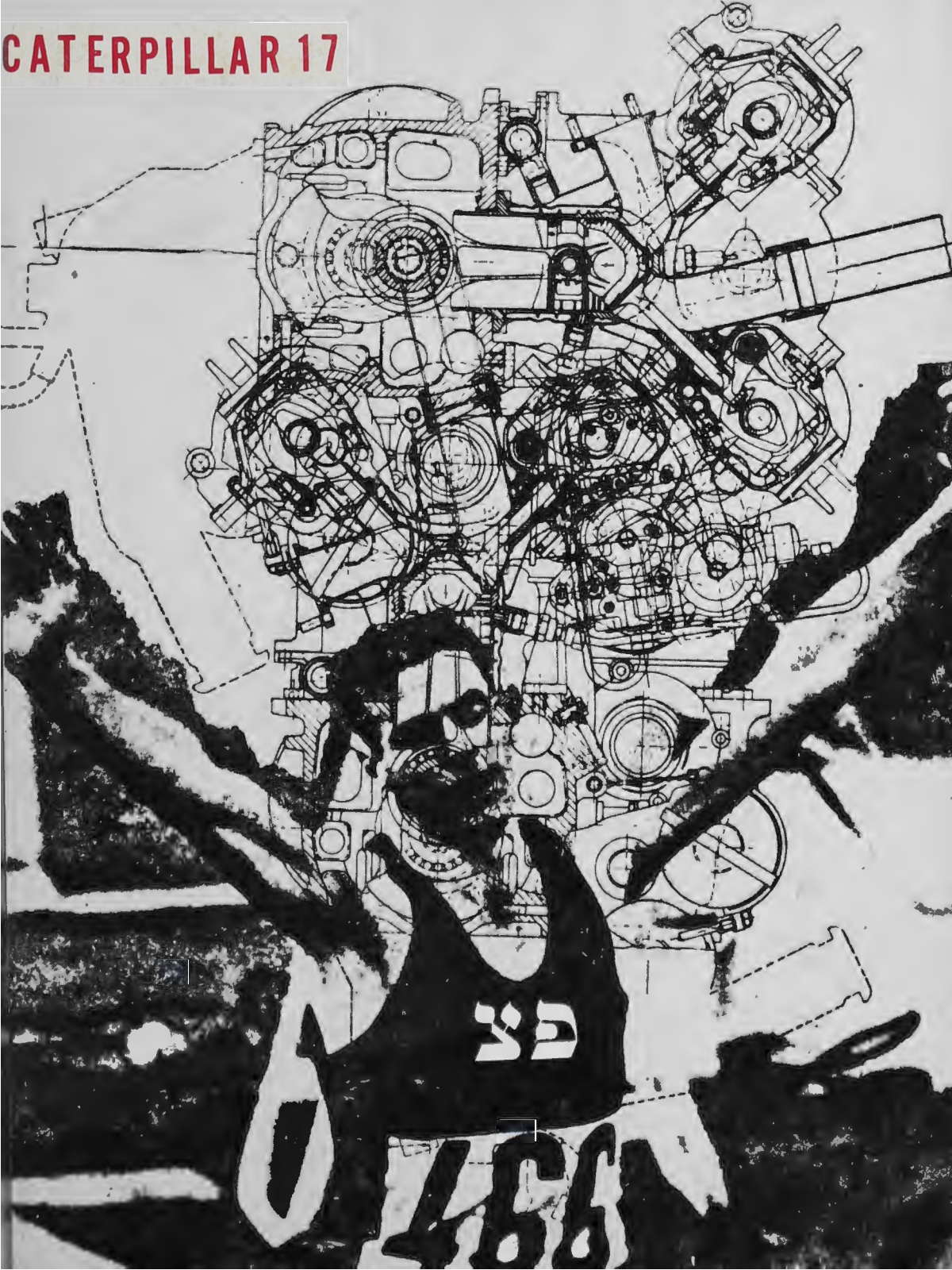


CATERPILLAR 17



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PAUL BLACKBURN

1926 - 1971

Philip Lamantia:

(3 poems

On the plain
of the angels

the forked ribs
are sinuously
capering
the milk of their entrails floods a city

and the arachnids are dancing
out of our lives
the meat-eating shadows are riding
into your eyes

Blasted with rainbows
your agates are flying
and stilled on the black opal beak

about to tear down the sky

A gorgon of the language cabal
steps forth
as if an illusive nymph
of the pavement

but it's really a metallic dragon

As I hum over the bruised cloud city
the rainbow streaks
its fang of light
genius molds the footstool
where the giant's paths
are strewn on your foreheads
o marble kingdoms
thrashed from the jungle's thigh

Flying beasts
are riveted on the air's toiling
crystalization
where lutes are hung
on a field between blue and whispering gold

Here's Merlin's moulting cage
also emblazoned
in the crevices of boiling minerals

The philosophic hand is certainly
a glass reflecting makers

Here the grasslined face
gulps a liquid pearl from the gutter

Here heady garbage glitters
through the sand its own perfection
between minute star-specks

and the infinite calling the grains...

Robert Kelly: THE LINE

By the hot days
unravelled
found my way
over the carpet
to a place like sleep

the carpet
is what I always
followed, it led
& made sense

made peace
in the conflict
I had almost
been able to hear
back between my
ears, behind them

close to the Elephants
Graveyard (occiput)
or between that & the
Armistice Table
in the dead dining car
where all our

treaties are signed &
forgotten, ratified
only in sleep, well,
it was sleep I was on

my way to then, back
 now with a report:
 the Waning Moon
 is hollow
 but very bright,
 its sky is limited
 forward by a line
 drawn from the Malleus
 of left ear to
 Cochlea of right ear
 also called Horizon.

Beyond that line, back
 of it I mean, where the Images
 I have noted occur &
 at the same time
 remorselessly vanish

the moon was simple in its
 sky, decrescent.
 On this side of the line
 that is, below the Horizon,
 there is only life,
 I mean my life, the personal
 signed unread letters
 binary flitting through the
 laughably socalled Will
 along the roadmaps of
 the southern body
 lifted awkwardly
 towards Grace
 with a mild sen-
 sation in anus
 still miles from
 anything like the
 City of Pleasure
 it is the purpose
 of those letters

to serve, invite
 free eats & steady
 job, Live It,
 down in the Muscle
 Cosmos
 on the sand of the beach.

I had been there
 long enough. A sword
 I found sticking up
 this morning was
 sign enough. Get
 away from this ocean.
 Get back to your
 work previous to any
 economy. Go home.

So I heard it, Vox
 Ensis, voice of a
 sword I found in my
 mouth then, my mouth
 tonguing these words.
 Words? Swords?
 Would I beggar
 or begone?
 Which way?

They were all
 questions
 & as such
 dreary to repeat.
 Beggar or begone.
 A choice,
 proffered at the tip
 of what I almost
 failed to recognize
 as my very own

instrument, My Sword

I hoicked it & moved
as I said over the
now a carpet towards
the sofa, no, not that
one today, the bed

the bed, the honest bed,
lay there
& passed
beyond any Image
to the place
where the images
suspend their fire
& snuff out,
blackness, not scary,

there was no one
there to be scared.

There are many
roads out of Body
& some of them
lead to this
imperial dark,
Piranesi drew this
city, Roma, Amor,
intricate place
nigh to the malarial
Campagna, the marshes
it is the business
of a man's life to
drain. Hercules.
All that. Cut

the drainage channel
towards the rivulet
that feeds the river
that sweeps the city.
The words
drain. I woke
like Encolpius
in Fellini,
beautiful, naked
in the redgold light of
dawn on a furrowed field.

I had won that
land back.

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the ORDINARY
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Theodore Enslin:

SYNTHESIS,
5.

After a breather---
a go

at it again,
an attempt to clear
the air---
what has turned from interest
to belief.

(You say?
and say---say it
clearly
but not again.

To take the like,
and to take the similar.
To know wherein
they differ:
How they apply.

For one
it was
'dry dusty' Winfield Scott
day in April Hill
when he learned
to 'work and wait'
to 'wait and work,'
to spend his years so,
but to find belief
at the end of it.

For another,
it was certainty.

fixed

the 'Aude sapere'

of Horace.

And for a third:

"Die wilde Macht ist Gross."

To find these

after a spell.

Or the spell becomes

the movement

each moment

that we look for

all of us

among old drawers

filled with odd things

of no particular consequence

until they and the moment

coincide.

It is from this

and from these

that our lives are made

the wholeness

the memory

as

the correspondence

of those things like

the others similar

which at points

may become the same

things

and correspondences

of things.

Would it do to recreate them?

Or how would it do,

by which inference,

by what obsolescence

do they leave us,

only scars

Samuel

Hahnemann

Constantine

Hering

and vestiges
 remaining?
 Compulsion and compression.
 It will be only these things
 by inference
 by referral,
 or polite refusal.
 Go on by .

The arrogance and enormity
 of those who hold on
 after they have left
 a spell
 for another spell.
 I do not read it easily
 or condone it -
 yet
 a human frailty -
 a very weakness
 by its impertinence---
 a lack of meaning.
 Yet my impatience
 drains me to no very good end.

Or a day
 the unexpected
 visit
 breaking up
 a grey hardness
 which had tightened
 almost to a scream.
 That you would come---
 lift me from it---.
 That we saw
 flowers together---
 and more than we
 had thought
 in the change of movement.

It strengthens me:
 A strength which is two,
 and these two, one.

Or to
 go
 by
 volition
 ' volare'
 or to fly.

It hedges and boxes
 the question
 if
 question need be
 stated or unstated---
 the similar
 law
 if you define
 law
 without reprisal
 set by arbitrary means.
 Compare and compress
 the incidence.
 One might say
 ' pejorative.'
 The dangers
 that do arise.

To reconcile the construct
 of what is naturally reconciled
 would be a good statement.
 What he attempted---
 in part achieved.
 Could we, as two,
 or any two parts
 do this without fusion?

C. G. Raue

The temptation to answer
 what cannot be answered.
 A welcome

 making
 or a departure.

Who touched me?
 (early morning)
 or at another time---
 the light of day

 counts,
 though the time structuring
 cannot apply.

Made haste
 over the clear
 watered stones---
 the heat against skin---
 the telling of such days---
 or

 such a day
 untold.

 I
 well
 and do arise.
 Such nonsense
 in this blathering account of it.

Having
 (finally)
 sorted out
 the
 (apparent)
 confusion
 it appears
 that:
 there were no difficulties .
 That these

things
were correspondences and
that there was time
(room) for all of them.

It is more than random thinking
to attempt this
to write down
and out of frustration.
Real enough
but inimical
to the day
in which I find myself.

Or suddenly---
to swing into life---
to advance
as if there had been
none---

sense
by full and smallness
something not yet known.
The:

C. G. Raue

Similia similibus
curentur et curantur.

Among all those reacting
to the period flashing
in and out on which
takes its own longer pace.
Nota bene.

Complicates the drive

toward

and away.

What will be the next
optimum

beginning?

As if to link

were to destroy.

Or as those

in other times

ploughed in a field of lupines

- wolf flowers -

devourers -

to enrich the ground.

' quae vertuntur aratro. '

Makes across the arm

a wheel of knowledge---

what will

and will not

imply

in

pulsate.

Tense giving---

or the receipt.

A seeing,

by chance,

the damascene rose

which some

find

overblown

and not to taste---

perhaps the associations

as there are

always these,

to make

in sense

the difference

of impression.

Mine,
 being open,
 I see it
 freely.

Coming in from the dark shed,
 the light of the sun

 up
 as it was not up
 when I went out---
 fear

of too much fire
 in such light---
 the sense of the head
 opened

 or the self
 separate
 behind the head.

I talk
 and build by talk
 what I must find later
 ***produce by compression---
 even the dilute
 substance

 stronger
 than in essence,
 purified
 by something else.
 To have slept longer---
 or slept
 not at all.

To have seen that house,
 no longer a house
 in the earlier sense,
 senescent,
 from which
 these books:

112 North Tenth St.,
 Philadelphia

One which
 echoed through me,
 both an opening.

his way, Or to walk

' each morning,
for over thirty years,
between 9 and 10 a. m. '

Raue to Hering

Or that rose falls
petals scattered
by no thing
heavier than the dew.

To whom the rising
and the falling down
The rise
 break
turning
 over
or the walk observed exactly.
" In the morning what I see, I see."
I go out
 I go in,
and the full high moon
swings over me.

Three things I lost by sleep,
but what I gained,
I know, because I lost these,
nor could I speak of loss
without it
as my own.

But there is the finding---
as it was:

The sun-
accustomed return
for a night's break
on the mountain,
still my accidental motion.
The return
by flowers---
thoroughwort
profuse this year,
and wood oxalis---
these two
for a morning's walk.
The later work
with the Materia Medica.
So that in finding,
I had both the loss
and the beginnings:
Count remembrance
too.

(Or you tell me of sea wrack-
-ΦΥΚΟΣ-
and I am grateful.)

The weight of it
again and again.
All that is seen,
all
that is not seen---
turned on to---in weight---
itself
from beginnings
until it is gone:
The wind of this late storm
in point.

Motioning further
 the time sustains
 a similar,
 another time.

To think parallel
 to what was thought.
 To set

 thus.
 There are days for it,
 and days which become confused.
 But the headmost ends
 stand within the sun.

As the saying was---
 the doing
 which does not
 follow,

 necessarily,
 but did - joyously -
 that the desire was more
 than the word

 or feigned
 impression of it.
 Tactile,
 the chances proved it.

The very
 acuteness
 of so
 walking
 turns
 anger
 to a use
 or
 perhaps
 a catalogue
 of plants
 where Homer

noted ships.

Impatient

of such things
in other years
I do return
find those I had forgotten
easily at hand.
Such days
as spend themselves---
and I am spent
with them to
grow
large.

Remembering a voice
which spoke of seas
and ships,
reverberating
in their hollows
from himself,
I do look out
this thick, dark morning,
wondering

where

or if
I could

my seas
turned inland,
and the wind sole
estuary
from another time
which smells of kelp
and wrack---

your word

John Gould
Fletcher

ΦΥΚΟΣ and where I came from.
Which pulses moved,

and which stood still
stock

still
I gasped

and set
the systole/diastole
in motion once again,
with no regard
for slop
or wallowing - though all of us
do wallow
in the pulp
before the juice expresses,
or we throw out
chaff.

Conrad Aiken

Slowly
and carefully
(by its own means careful)
comes the

shower
(damp
at any rate---)
where I sit

no rain
but rain in sight.
One hour and another
from the town's bell---
do I

listen to it,
or prepare myself
for listening?
Once, knowing less,
I wrote better of it---.
Make motion

and
replete,
make more,
as more becomes.

(Starlings:
And 'the hell you say.')

σαμβύκη -
which we know
in sounds,
the sound of which
gave rise to it,
as sound and fire
the energy
in unseen things
to scatter proofs
and leave the laboratories
untended.

And next
a wisdom
rising:---
How do I know
what I know,
or do I know it?
(Sensing being higher
potency

and dilution.
"Do not believe a thing
until it proves itself,
nor disbelieve
in equal measure."
Constantine
Hering

And my years
spent gathering these bits
to piece together,
or bind up wounds.
Then the accusation:
The crowd of them
break in again
with fear
(not incredulity)

what they do not think
they cannot.
Thus they destroy.

Moonlight broken up,
or caught within -
a sob

for cobweb
or a dream.
Many in these places---
many in another.
Shake the head,
go on again.
No longer young,
at least

no longer
in its primal meaning.
(Thinking this

standing in grey morning fog
below a dripping elm.

'Ging heut morgan---' Gustave Mahler 1884
As I still remember it.
'Blümlein blau! Verdorre nicht---'
or

as if a heat had struck me
Unknowing,
and yet known.

Born as if it had come
from outside known sources.
The fear of strength
unknown.
(Could it be known?)
Or

the dependence upon
stimuli
outside

of myself.

 Whatever I know.
By whom I am known.
Or simply to take a bath.

The young man says
of those born
at the beginning of the year---
beyond the ides of March---
"We Aries people
have great energy---
to begin---"
and left it hanging.
If he were right?
And there were no
completions---.

Came in for the shower,
when I should have been
outside

 in it.

Bird of ill passage,
no repute.
Why?

 Why?

'verdorre nicht'
Yes.

 And accept it.
The hard part
by a hand's breadth.
Craw broken.
Craw dropped.
Yes.

 Tirah, lirah,
Heia!

Almost as if I no longer cared
whether

the mail came or not.
 A separation from myself,
 'as if the head were removed'
 afar
 off.

On such a day,
 and in such weather,
 the buds bent over,
 hung on the east side
 beyond the sun' s reach.

A burst into
 flame
 as sound
 may burn in
 complete
 combustion:
 (Köchel verzeichnis 563---
 the first minuet.)
 It occurs as a warmth
 in a room against winter---
 hardly a place to recognize
 oneself,
 yet where it occurs..
 The day rising to its later heat.
 Tension spreading
 from things
 barely known,
 or, indeed, impossible.
 Yet there are these:
 Always.

Run through the schema:
 See what that is
 about.

Many things coming,

yet compressed.

The night closer,

but no closer

to what I had thought of it.

Asking the way:

A voice

low

and definite

in its indefinite opening.

Shattered by the figure
behind it.

Or I finished a job:

Its completeness,

not in the holding

of things,

but in knowing

that it is saved

from other things.

A word from the past:

"All fragrant plants

have a tendency to bring on sleep."

Or the sad voice once more:

"I am neither. I am neutral."

What does a man think

to achieve that---

simply---

and not as

momentary admission?

Vogt in Stille:

Materia

Medica

Winfield Scott

Hill

Could it be that there has been

a time

when the face of death

turned to be seen?

In other weathers

other times.

I build against this
or against that.

I look out.

I look in.

I am on

looker.

(not to be read as such)

Complained of the heat,

or of the cold,

beyond complaining:

Yes.

Or the command

outside..

Once in awhile

it would be shyness---.

And he speaks of:

The right hand which fends,

and the left which defends.

Then:

Son of the left hand.

So I lost all that.

It passed away from me

and left nothing.

(A few

bear turds in the driveway

long after the bear had left

unseen.)

It breaks the heart to look

where there is no light,

and the 'lancinating pains'

continue

day

after

day.

One man tries it---

stumbles

as he shuffles.
 Scuffs his toe.

Too bad---
 I have no time---
 or a pinch of dust---
 poppy seed
 in the wind.
 Wherever I was blown,
 or am blown---

thrown
 against the high side of the wind.

Or if she writes, 'gutter to gutter' Daphne
 the questions rise Marlatt

further:
 if it might be
 heart to heart,
 mind to mind,
 or thigh to thigh
 in cases
 less actual
 than obvious.

Always, what we might do
 with our lives---
 such commitments being asked---
 the constrictions

of two minds
 around a problem.

The confinement
 which one attempts
 to foist on another,
 'with the kindest motives.'
 It is just here
 that one stops, changes directions
 and goes on.

One!

Why not say the straight road---
the negations

and then

myself?

Is it too late,

or do I burst the latch

by unknowing fortitude?

Perhaps a gnostic pressure:

"It's nine months between drinks,"

which hurts

without holding

or making bold to say.

(Still wondering about the bear shit
on the road.)

Or

A history of Joe Pye,

being mainly that of

Mithridates Eupator

the healer,

King of Pontus,

and these the eupatoria:

Purpureum et Aromaticum et Perfoliatum,

wands in the history

or

more properly these roadside ditches.

Kerrisye, the cherry, or to cherish,

all the way from Pontus to New England.

Bits we discovered:

How long, o lord,

how long,

the drink,

the darkness, and the given names?

strange heritage,

remembrances

by hallowe' en

or Stonhenge---

the demon
as the little horseman,
being Algol to Alcor,
opening

a moment,
closing over deserts,
clouds which do not bring rain
or mercy---

merely dust.

What you have said this morning,
does not move me
more than to concern,
and I will not warn,
or speak of lust.
Perhaps the lust is needful,
or a change of life.
But I do not care
to see you hung
by pikestaff for a thing
you cannot help.
Nor what you cannot force.

In
sinuous whisper---
the sound of blood
moving and re-
moving.

Or
rather
over
to
the key
the
fracture
completing
only

or---.

Or did one say

at the moment:

" This is dawn" ?

Could we have known so many other things
without knowing this ?

Did the woman,
talking as if oblivious to the other, say
" I don' t know whether or not
I shall ever be able to relate to her, "
And the other, carrying feelings of guilt,
did she

look for the dawn

after

committing a theft ?

The real problem:

Mine as anyone' s,
is the matter of timing--

no one

in his attempt will see this,
or appreciate its elements.

Least of all

the one who is concerned with time
as time to

or not to,
setting the slight watch
before going to sleep.

It is a matter concerning many.

It

concerns

me.

(This is dawn,

or this is death,

or the role of angels

played for death:

His audience

thinned out.
A spiral of blood coiled for the
sound
its sibillance
making and remaking.)

Suddenly:

the desire to go back---
to take you with me,
to see

whether or not
the locusts are still in the meadows,
or bouncing bet.

neglectful
Blossoms to make one sleep,
nepenthe.

But shake off credulity

or the classic learning,
which is nothing---

a hoax.
As if to think could be formed
from thinking---

only words Goethe
which do not think,
do not make

a silence.

To rest from the ideas
of the past months---

return to them
with another dimension,
my own fortunes

contained
in the search:

Oh sirs,
an empty pocket.

Yet I could
 go back
 and further back
 find
 what there is
 to find.

The hint that such a space
 could not be held,
 at least by one---
 though to another it left
 spaces.

 Vague uneasiness---.
 Thinking back to days spent
 on beaches---
 changing the shapes
 of undressed people---
 their identities:

 That Luise Rainer
 might be married to Goethe.
 Expressed in terms
 of savagery
 equal at least
 to the feeling
 at times going beyond
 or, at least,
 redirecting it.
 In this way to assuage
 words

 inadequacy
 and movement
 back into the hardness
 of the self.
 (But looking with tears
 or madness
 at a future
 confirmed in such terms.
 As future equals past.)

Mozart in Vienna:
(1782-83)

as listed in Köchel from
c. 170 - 220---

a burst of manhood
storming heaven---
robustness in a sense
not matched since.

As I would listen
(not discounting
the slighter Giuliani.)

Preparing for a voyage
back into discovery---
old haunts to new purposes.
The necessity

Truro projected

and the ache.

Will you understand this,
or can you, in all love,
come with me?
What I have written
comes closest to no sound at all.
Does it

make sense?

Or what in sense
can it make?
Breaking through the block
to a place
where there are plains,
rivers and mountains:
The continent of love
contain' d.

Yes,

and a few words
for that fellow
from the beginning
a year ago,
but in his sense
still

a corporeal ghost.
 Dense as the logic
 of his greatness,
 if there is such---
 an inconsistence---
 and this
 to step in.

Sorry,
 but I am on my way,
 with both what is needed
 and hurtful---
 hopefully a balance,
 held against the side of me.

Suppose it were said
 in a long term' s fucking?
 That, too.

 Almost without body---
 the lust to exult in it
 gone by.

 Last year' s seed,
 a hay seed
 wisp
 cobweb
 item or two
 generie and
 genius of the place.
 Separated?
 Ah!

As if fever---

 the sound
 catching
 and recatching
 reverberating
 blood
 to blood

K. 183

mention
and return
 from mention.

Casting a bolder lot,
a simple fever.
A night which should have been
rich in dreams
or their disquietude,
and only a few shreds
undistinguished and grey
as the clouds scattering
after the same night' s
small rain.

Hardly noticed that t here
is a chill in here.
Guessing it by
an exact instrument
which registers more than I do.
Times when I need,
and ask for that need---
what I would give
if it were asked of me---
what I have given.

But you do not.
I suppose a response is in this,
and a deserved one.
I understand you better,
but I do not like or accept
all that I understand.
The tables switched:
Many times I withheld myself
from others.

 Now that I give,
it is not given me.

There is no return,
and you have what you have,
which is to say:

what you want.

To protest that this is not so,
may be honest

so far as you know it---

but it is basically dishonest.

I know you too well.

So that I return to the old man's note.

'I am neither, but neuter.'

W S H

A doctor would have known that much.

I will seal a note

outside of this,

and give it to you:

I have already told you

what I need for answer.

There must be no reason

or explanation.

Reasons are worthless,

and fall flat on their faces.

It is what we do.

How it would end---

how this brief tolerance.

A section

should create itself,

if character of words

does enough for it.

What is the sworn allegiance,

but a life in art,

evading the outside life,

which speaks a horror,

and could speak reasons.

It will end - a dry dusty

April afternoon,

with nothing to do:

I am neither.

David Bromige:

CLOSE

Somewhere they lie --
close, that couple
who compel
any one among us
& our compromises

with them, 2
& 3, 4' s & 5' s, &
6' s -- I
recently got married
-- to race ahead,

that' s their urging,
but when did you
first find yourself
aware of them,
I was eleven,

saw them in my mind,
in my mind' s eye,
reached down a hand
quickenened by my tongue
as if to touch them,

evoking, even to command
their presence, how often since
to be commanded in my turn --
the entrances were fearsome then,
hard to be believed, & torment

could attend on
each attempt. Today
they' re easily encountered,
a courtesan possesses
an infinitude of dresses

inflaming with such various
guises, to always the same pitch --
the woman in the restaurant,
the woman on the plane,
the one who met the plane,

wanted to be singularly
real, to the stranger each was
next to, or hoping I
might be the next
to bring us to the same.

What is it? Cattle
stretching through a fence --
"glands" -- the "threat &
promise of dissolving to sheer
energy" -- how the legs feel,

after, as though floating --
but something further,
look at the profusion
everywhere, of forms with faces
fronting them, not ours,

yet similar, however
absolutely other --
hear the pleas, I am
going to split, there
is nothing here, for me --

I wanted to be famous,
wanted to discover
where that lever was,
to shift the whole,
wanted to be loved,

by one, by everyone --
now they couple,
while I sit here writing
Now they couple, writhing,
the woman I am living with

is sleeping, but
this afternoon we were
visiting their couch --
but then I woke --
to the distances of hills

about this house, a radio
crackling with static,
an incoherent friend --
morsels of so-called news,
important

beyond my understanding
of what each means to me --
no wonder any longer they are
so adored, with impenetrable ease
accessible --

I see the legs like fingers forked --
but I would talk to you
being human, of them, though you hear
as I do, as they do,
now they are asleep.

Daphne Marlatt:

RINGS, iv.

Eyes shut, Relax now, can relax all over, breathe like asleep, pretend to be sleeping if you can remember how it feels, whole, your whole body, before it comes again. But don't think of that now, relax. Al, listen, Al's still reading,

" 'I beg your pardon,' the doctor said. 'I am perhaps a little jealous since you use your language to communicate with yourself and not with us...

(can't get comfortable,

To relax. Wrong side maybe)

" 'I do my art in both languages.'

Deborah said, but she she did not miss the threat..."

(oh there's

the sheet, the, Beginning to tighten now, lie still, Relax everything but that, now, A breathing, climb, higher, B, breathe higher, C, it's all turning to, liquid, hot, spasm (smother), OH, very deep in, all, in it grinding me to liquid shit again... shit.

Up. Al: Again? Can't help it. That damn enema. And that I ASKED for it, thinking it would rid me of this feeling, this, terrible urge to go, got to, hurry (totter) down the hall in this, ridiculous, gown. I feel like a child half out of clothes, bare back cool. To get there before (ah, this long corridor almost normal, window, life goes on out there's a busy day, traffic

Here. The door & tiled floor under my feet, won't turn on the light it's so small & stuffy in here. Sit, thank god, but now (crack of light under the

door) if only it would all come out. But what if I had the baby in the toilet! in the dark. If I could just curl up on the floor there's not even enough room (bet they made it like this on purpose) maybe it's a natural urge) just to curl up in the dark on my own (cats do it) on my own I could be calm. Here it comes, relax (how can I relax on the toilet? should be back in bed) why did I come? You should have known there was nothing more. Stop thinking of that now, too late, breathe, It's tighter, breathe higher, Oh, hands against the walls, hang on, no, let go, go into it, don't fight it (all doubled up) don't fall into the toilet. LET GO. Oh, that was bad. Hardly breathed at all. Coz you were scared. Scared of being alone when it happened, when something happened. After all that about the dark. Better go back before it comes again.

Down the hall. There he is, the doctor, such a small man, owl-man, & so imperious. But he does look worried. Where were you? Now don't get up again. You're not supposed to be wandering around after the waters break.

Little girl being scolded. But he was actually concerned. Al in that silly gown ushers me in. They couldn't believe you'd gone to the bathroom. Nobody told me not to. I know. but you don't have to go anymore, you can't possibly HAVE anymore. But it FEELS like it.

Nurse pops in. Do you want some demerol? The doctor said you could have some. Like it was a gift.

No.

Up on the bed again (up on the roof, might as well be). With a little help (getting weak? feeling well-worked, sweaty). Now, find the right position. Because, is it? Yes, it's coming again. Relax, breathe. Good, I'll do it this time, I'll ride over it. Breathe higher. Remember to relax everything. That leg too. Higher, faster, But it's bearing down, Harder, not the right

position, it's going to, suck me in, quick, think of what Al's reading,

"By the light of my fire, Bird-one, Anterrabae said (breathe) see how carefully, how carefully (higher) they separate you from small dangers (pant): pins and matches and belts and shoelaces and dirty looks. (It's going.) Will Ellis beat the naked witness in a locked seclusion room?"

Where is that? A third of the way through? I can't remember. Wonder how long it's been. Seems a long time I've been turning, twisting, half the sheets on the floor. There must be some way, some position. What did the book say for back labour? Try it on your side, face Al, the book, the sunny window. Sunny. Now relax. It's not pain, it crushes me, it grinds me into thick, hot, water... it wears me down fighting it. If I could only, let go...

* * *

I've settled into it. Tired & floaty warm. Except my feet are cold, did they say that? Your feet would be cold. Al's socks, & my legs all bristly, I didn't shave. Well, it doesn't matter, I can't get into that. Socks feel good.

Why couldn't I eat the soup? It smelled meaty, nourishing. Chicken noodle. Such work to eat the noodles. Even the broth. But the red jello they brought (& I spilled, sticky against my leg), so cold & clear, sweet. Like sun in Jim's wine glass that time in nashville when the day stood still, all that afternoon was dust in everything we ate, luminous, air thick with it like pollen/honey moved thru, always, never notice. Coming, & it doesn't matter, I can ride it. Be a cat relaxed & lie so it contracts but doesn't move me, stays, limbs dissociated while it, breathe higher, grinds my belly, back, to liquid, panting's a familiar place at work, it's going, it does work, the breathing does...

" 'Well, really, every CASE like you ought to realize that THAT HELL' -- and she began to shake with shudders of high shrill laughter -- 'can't last any more than you can stand it. It's like physical pain -- tee-hee-hee -- there's just so much and then, no MORE.' "

It doesn't matter. He's right, or she is. But I'm not the same as them, which seems to far away I can't get into it. He is, though. I've never heard him read aloud a drama, personalities. Strange world. Strange book, but that's all right, he's reading it to me. What was the book we were going to? Or the song we never did decide. Now it comes, they said god save the queen if you want, higher now, I never seem to need it, just climb higher, panting, feel it clench deep, still the ends of me relax. Panic's gone. Why didn't I take it before? This could go on all afternoon, Al reading, my warm sticky bed, sun through the window, I know it's sunny out there, afternoon, could go on for hours tho the hours lead somewhere, lead me, I don't fight to get there. Is he really into the book? I might tell him, but it doesn't matter, let his voice move on. I feel warm & tired, catlike. Even the blood trickling down is comfortable. It's me. It's happening as if I KNEW how it would be.

* * *

Uuungh. Against the wall, push my arm against the wall & push it thru my arm, that terrible urge to convulse, push, get it out. No, it's a mistake, you're not ready yet, you could hurt yourself. Don't push. I WANT to twist my body against it. Want to constrict. Stay open, open. Against this WRINGING? It comes so fast, I've got to, got to. Don't. And rigid, all my relaxation gone beyond it, hold the pelvic floor loose & work it thru your arms,

Uuungh, it's not pain, it's got to, got to. That FORCE. I want to scream I give up,

twist into one tight fist, clench, & push it, PUSH it.

"You're doing fine," Ha. Why don't they let me? You know why. Al, folding my arm & saying one, two, blow. He's doing it too fast, but he remembered, he's doing it. Not yet. Yet, yes, blow, blow. The book said you can't blow & push at the same time. Bloow. You can. I still did. Don't. Everything's speeding up. One, two, blowowow. "There's only a little bit left, hang in there." As if I can, as if I will it! They don't know. Can't hang on much longer, going to, the next one, going to give in. Oh no, blow. Try. You might hurt his head. Blow. There's the sponge (Al) on my lips. Can't open my eyes to thank him. Coming again. Ah, ah, can't stop it, stop writhing around & pushing. "That did it," the nurse said, "that was the worst one, the others won't be so bad."

& they're wheeling me out, it's happening. The open door.

* * *

A lot of people in gowns & they're all talking busy. A lot of white light. A table they slide me onto & there's the doctor, Well, smile. After all this we're ready! & the anaesthetist (? yes), & someone saying oh she's fine, she's doing very well. Can't answer. It's coming. Push. Again, push. Was I really pushing? It didn't seem to be pushing from inside.

And there's the mirror where I can see, except he's standing in the way. They've got me all positioned, knees up, feet in stirrups. Al's at my head. There's so much going on, I can't follow it. So much talk. It's coming again, now push. Now someone's saying push. That's still not hard enough. I'm going to have hemorrhoids tomorrow. All that blood rushing into my face.

I look up at Al, he's got the mask on. His eyes look encouraging. Next time I'll be

ready for it. And someone's saying, You can really push now, give it all you've got. I'm NOT doing it right. But it's so hard to tell when it begins & then it's here & I'm left behind, push, no block &, push. Push, too late, the tail end.

A shot? No, no, it's just salts. Your blood pressure's high. Well, at least I'm working even if it doesn't feel right. But this time, this time, I'm ready & remember, it's the blocking, build up pressure & time it just right to PUSH, block and

PUSH.

Nothing changes. There in the mirror hardly any hole, just a little dark space. Why doesn't it change? How long has she been listening to his heart with the stethoscope? Something's wrong? Again now. Block &, push, PUSH. And the doctor's saying, we're going to use forceps, he's posterior. What's that again? Face down? He's supposed to be face up? He says, he's lying relaxing with his hands behind his head. Relaxing? Little person!

And the anaesthetist is kind in explaining what the epidural will do, what it will knock out. The least, I say, I want the least. & Ross, it's what's best for the baby, he's getting tired. You don't have to remind me, I want to say, I want him healthy, whole. Of course it's for him, whatever they say. And to the anaesthetist, who is young & seems sympathetic, Will I still feel him? you will feel something, but you won't feel as much as you would ordinarily, & you won't feel the episiotomy. Yes, well. (it's not important.) & they give it to me. & now he's standing with Al drawing diagrams on my pillow of the nerves which are getting knocked out. I can't feel the contraction, the nurse has her hand at the top of my belly, she has to tell me now PUSH. And I push by sheer will because I can't feel my muscles pushing down there, but I push. And it's a good push. Someone said, there's a lock of dark hair. I keep thinking, dark hair. Has

he done the epesiotomy? Whenever I open my eyes the room is filled with white bustling, everyone is doing something specific, we're all working together for him, for this one with his hands behind his head who doesn't even know. When I look in the mirror it's much wider, there IS hair. His hair! all matted against my red flesh. Now lie back. & I feel the forceps go in, barely. There's his head, they say. Now gently, now hardly push at all. And I feel something like a loss, like the end of a sigh, A cry! a squall of absolute protest, pain? He's real. & I haven't seen him! And someone says a boy (I knew) with black hair. They lay the cord on my stomach & he's upside down, streaked with blood, & reddish, his small round buttocks & head all wet, matted, all that hair. They turn him, such big balls.

He's crying.

I can't stand it, I want to hold him, PLEASE. And they lay him snuggled in a blanket on my stomach. He's perfect, bawling, little blue fists. Small & perfectly HERE. He's here, I say to Al. & he's beautiful. Al's bending over, a little shy but grinning too. And he is, & I say to everybody, he's beautiful. Most of all to him, because he's come thru that ring of flesh, into our light, He's BORN, tight-fisted in my arms, eyes screwed shut, shutting us out. Yet he can hear, & maybe feel someone cradling him against her, hush. hush. I hold him. It's all right. You're born.

Tenney Nathanson:

DREAM POEM # 2

(for Hector Ariza

Enter the graveyard
 bear the body
 eight men and a dead man
 (the dreamer did not count
 the dead man nor can he recall
 or place this man

(in spanish one says only el muerto
 the dead one must remember in english
 the phrase is improper if the word
 man is omitted

The dreamer discovers
 the gravedigger he
 tells the dreamer
 to assist in preparation of the grave

it is not then / it is later
 the dreamer grows frightened
 tenia miedo / he had fear

digging the grave
 the hole
 the shovel strikes
 otro muerto / another dead (man

under the gaze of the gravedigger
 he removes this dead man making room
 for the dead whose place he prepares

that is lays the present occupant
 of the dug grave
 on the ground to one side

It is then that the figures appear
 from the right through trees
 (it is afternoon
 they appear
 from the light-source
 which filters in spots through
 branches

las mujeres de los dientes largos /
 the women of the long teeth

the dead man lies upon the ground
 and the women of the long teeth
 enter through trees
 transform / from this point forward
 the dreamer dreams in terror
 fears

in the quivering of flesh
 the arms
 the center of the back
 the interior portions of the thighs

the women of teeth approach the dead the meat
 draw near the dreamer as adjacent (spacial
 coincident (spirit

it is the gravedigger
 the assurance that the dreamer need fear nothing
 holds him to the grave

yet /

se alejan

they move off
grow far

or /

become distant

they approach the young women

who are perhaps beautiful

who are pure

they wear white

se visten de blanco /

they clothe themselves of white

The women of the long teeth

se les cogen

grab take hold them

when the mothers appear

sprinkle holy water before them

thrown upon the long-toothed women

those who clothe themselves of white

go free

this is the moment of the scene's

dissolving

this is the moment in dreams when

one speaks of the "wash" of morning

a woman stands beside the dreamer

exhaustion falls on him
 who has taken the dead from his grave
 lain him out upon the ground

the woman offers a conveyance
 the form of it is unclear
 but it is not then it is later
 already travelling viajando ya mas rapido

the dreamer doubts the source of the gifts
 the form unclear
 the origin cannot be sure

and the woman asks
 why holy water is thrown upon her

-por que me tiras agua bendita-

as though it were done
 already and the dreamer
 does so / ahora lo hace

"i know not which you are
 the conveyance
 the form and nature of
 the gift"

Later in the square of a small town
 the steps of the church a Father
 will provide holy water

agua en cantidad suficiente

sufficient unto the journey

Jerome Rothenberg:

THE IMMIGRANT

for Charles Chaplin

feathers hang from the fingers of the immigrant
 who will embrace an egg whose eyelids
 even now close over the first half-dollar in the world
 a moon for the desert America was building
 suddenly gone haywire falling soft & cheezey
 down an endless line of streets with restaurants
 polished floors you slid on as the waiter
 the electrician sometimes even sometimes
 the man who finds a stranger's wallet
 in his soup runs off from there
 to Yellowstone poor epileptic honeymooner
 who wears a bearcoat in the Rockies
 your bear-love licking at your trail
 far from Newark desperado with a rubber gun
 you make your final shootout with the bearded lawmen
 but earlier the week you rode in steerage
 Rotterdam receded only the smell of sausages
 brought Poland back that & the message
 of the unwashed cunt the lady in the bunk above you
 aimed at your nose bright sexual pickles
 a garlic polka with all the words changed into Yiddish
 the Hungarian tenor intercepted slipping
 a hand into her drawers then left you
 seated on a stoop in Monroe Street an orphan
 unattentive to the band that played The Immigrant Shuffle
 you learned to labor slowly
 at first but tested your dreams of leisure
 in the bitter factories the dark Jew

was your boss the bright Jewesses
 worked beside you on the line
 would fill your dinnerpail with stuffed dough
 chickpeas incredible farmer cheeses wrapped in rags
 tastes that lit up names in your mind
 from the old town of girls with poppyseed eyes
 smiles of white raisins
 whose mouths still moist from puddings
 encircled your putz their heavy
 honeydew breasts cut open licked clean
 later in your secular imagination
 sleeping with the German collie you attempted
 abominations to the rabbis hugged the gentle fur
 in friendship your first drop of semen
 freed you maddened into cabarets
 to sing the song scrawled on your shirtsleeve
 the words in middle European ageless anthem of your race
 no demoralized proletarian you were
 the sweet soul in exile cockeyed scholar
 who couldn't spell his name but stood
 three hours in long underwear (torn in back to show
 a handsome pair of balls) outside the steamroom
 devised a fancy maneuver to keep a step
 ahead of the Sicilian faggot with raised bathbrush
 twirling his heavy moustaches soaked in pepper
 gaily you put your lips to his then sneezed him
 through the doorway falling saw his cruel life
 snuffed under the feet of marchers
 strikers you led down Easy Street & up into Heaven
 became an Irish cop yourself but kept your earlocks
 your gaberdines hidden you still ate radishes for lunch
 scraps of chickenwings for dinner let the skin
 slide down your throat & choke you
 the contradictions were almost a relief
 for some for you the clock kept spinning
 wheels hummed in the tower
 everything ran by electricity & worried you
 nickels & dimes sparked into life they bounced

off counters into your cuffs now you were always bending
looking at your shoes would even stick chewing gum
on broomsticks sought lost gold down manholes
from there you took the steamer
to Alaska trudged endless miles from Fairbanks
with your Yukon love howling you wore a derby
suspenders pulled your pants up to your chest
& left you gasping visions from last year's snowstorms
filled your eyes & mind with gold
gold were your watch & chain your teeth were gold
you walked on a gold carpet America was gold to you
a gold boat drifted on a lake of gold
in the cabin gold men sat around a table
their smiles were gold & frozen like the gold fly
halfway between the ceiling & the floor
suspended in your dream of gold
becomes a gold pin for your tie the golden girl clips off
will let you stroke a gold tit in return
she smiles for the demonic newsmen
flashbulbs shatter the limits of your wakefulness
at midday in forget of all love

Laurence Weisberg:

(3 poems)

(for Philip Lamantia)

Saturn suffocates in my groin of marble.
In darkness the hands break apart haloes
return melted glaciers to the root of the saxophone.
Within these linen sheets rainbows play upon flesh
hunt out light die of exhaustion
leaving over the sheets stains of prismatic fluid.

Restless fire of coma breathes a secretive thigh
wherein I dream myself rescuing you Oh Mother
from the convulsive throat of paranoic desire.
Mother of Night
I touch your body
twelve sleeping children sprung from your head
a jungle suspended over your shoulder
over your thighs the lost galaxy swims toward my
outstretched palm
summoning suns to surround this hotel of spirit.
What excrement flies out of your ass perfumed?
the stupor it achieves is thrust from the hieroglyphic
shadow is a hurricane that marks up my lips with shyness.

You govern the space in which the noble sun
crowned with paperclips weeps openly cascading down
to me the untranslatable rays of totemic bile.

You stand alone this night on a thick balcony
remembering the time wasps came and stung you from
head to foot
and returned to pull out their stingers they had forgotten

in their ecstasy.

Mother of Night I hear stars mumbling inside your heart
 I feel the radiating card and the soft eagle of depression.
 Great lover of all men I see fortune locked into your window.
 I bear down in my lust snapping bones
 revealing the demonic syntax.

* * * * *

So long ago the kiss of magic
 So long ago the armour of spirit and galatic misery
 the tower of faith sways under the ribs
 of the tortoise at midnight the hands
 of the tortoise are milked
 for its precious prayer.

Your cheek against

stone convulsive

erect as daylight

No one

smoothes the eye between

grindings of
frustration

My heat

is my own labor of
love

Thomas Meyer:

SHIELD

designs from
the 18th book
of the Iliad



earth,
sky' s arc

sea,
tireless sun

full moon
all stars

that circle
in clusters
the heavens

Pleiades, Hyades,
strong, Orion,
the Bear (or Plow)

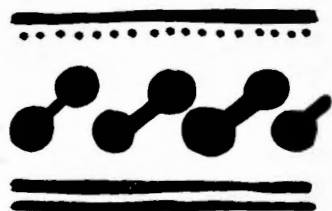
she turns
in place,
waits for Orion

& never bathes
in Ocean



brides led
by torchblaze

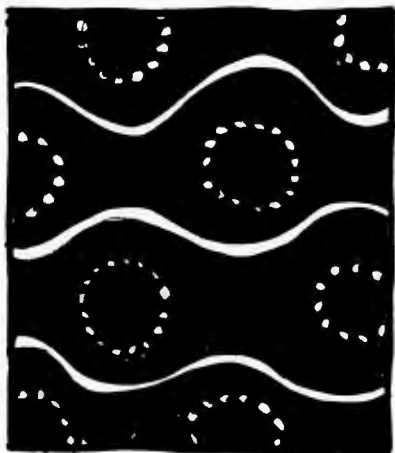
loud songs



Ares
& Pallas Athene

gold chiefs, gods
in gold armor --
big, beautiful
easy to spot -- men

ants
at their feet

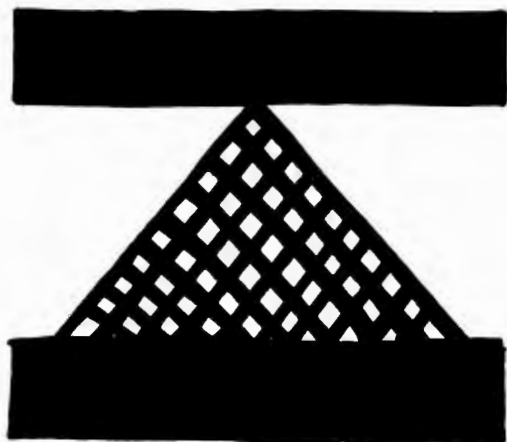


soft fat new land

yoked beasts, plowmen

follow
deep furrows
back & forth

the field
behind them
black



reapers

sharp sickles,
cut corn falls

handfuls, rows
straw rope bound

sheaves



an ox
under
an oak

slaughtered

scattered
white barley



black
grapes

silver
stakes



clear
tone &
slender
voice

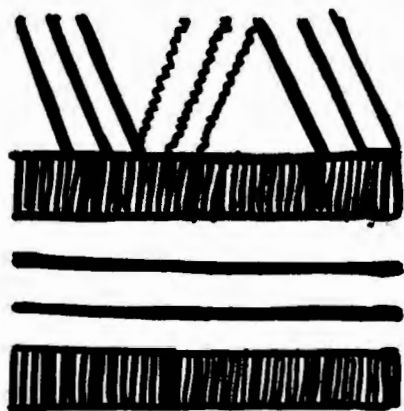
phorminx, Linos
song



lyre-
horned cattle

hurry from
dung yard to
pasture by

murmuring river,
quivering reed
thicket



broad valley, trees

places for white sheep

to stand, for shepherds
to lie

under
cover

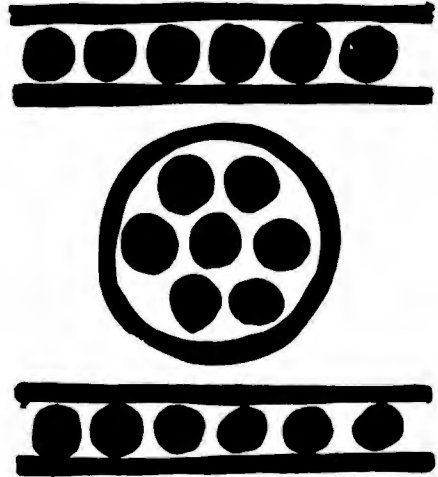


ground to dance on

like Daidalos
made for
Ariadne in
broad Knossos

quick light steps

like a potter' s
feet try
out a new wheel
with kicks & spins



Hugh Seidman:

VERMONT

the energy drain
into the biologic clock

VideoFreex

digging the ironies
the sixties

Goddard' s car
this
high way

the power decision of solitude

Sat Nam

the Tantrik

all-feeling
wired on vibes

the Stone' s Wild Horses the people
the blank world & all of my allegiance
the unreachable irreducible decimal

why is this agony maintained

the way is not mine
nor will I climb
with Vishnu on his rope
but shut from the mass

in which Nancy stands
against me

who goaded with enlightenment
allegory of Gautama's temptation

are these people child-like or childish

the serpent bursting
thru the crown chakra's lotus
instead of the turning in
God's great self-circle

or do Shiva & Shakti
couple to remain

the question

neutral
as the stars

Laurie in Benson
the parasite of the brain
equivalence

no one to touch me

Stephanie

& I

vulnerable in her scrutiny

Thanksgiving & giving thanks

power of the river
the 8-fold way

the Movement

Mungo
Diamond

Virginia & the children
beating laundry on the rocks

sentence

bugs
logs
cata-
logs

in so far as
I am able
to remember

sentimentality of family warmth
e.g., communes
& drugs don't help doctor
when we, I, heal myself

Diana in California after
3 weeks of the Primal

penis cut
in REM sleep's
last fragment

inertia's humiliation
loathing that has banished me
from she who might comfort

how can I
so cut

Barbara
now way from this darkness

unto you

firefly

Ivan the cat catching mice

John Sinclair
10 years for dope

the mountains smiling at

Dylan & at Marx

the power flux
at the edge into sacredness

Vallejo street

the shine
at the energy hub that

3 1/2 billion cannot be mistaken in breath
to the key throb of the bee
in the locks of the countryside
of the great machine that is no machine

Jeans in '33 reminded mind is matter
orgone's demonstration of capitalism's
pseudo-scientific indirect consequence of
space time welded without seam

entrance
seconds of transcendence

Snyder's family tree
in the back country's vanguard

the fourteen thousand million
bubbles in Koilon

the lintels of the door of
 the power flux of the bridge
 opening onto the shrine at
 Vallejo street

in New York I lose everything

the road nowhere
 one end of the sky to the other
 & back

we walk

cloud passing sun
 devastation of puberty
 the past

arms implored
 to the raingod' s smouldering
 yesterday

anger
 unreasoned & unappeasable
 I know

what you think of this
 parents
 lurking

lurking
 Mary Ann
 mescaline
 the hard iron indictment

windlass
 creak of the tree
 torrent forest

petunias
 assunder at the sky' s crack
 my own
 deceptions
 opened

assunder
 on the path
 & then hell fell
 the house
 fire dryness

Xrist too got off
 Reich will get you there
 feel bad but feel

coherence of the flower

grinning commune T' ai Ch' i master bearing
 huge purple blossom

the sage

come join us to chant
 the sunrise in

ecstasy bathe me tho I isolate the endless
 abstract flame of the not-abstract alter me

Nancy I accused you of arrogance
 Clayton' s barbed insistence
 alive to other' s pain but not within
 pity or seducement

motionlessness

flesh

Radical Therapist

buttercup
in the flange
of the road

Jill Johnson

suck & kiss of the clover

jail terminus

the fear of the backwards
loneliness
my father' s battles
in the bars of the city

this first artisan

Brian McInerney:

A LETTER TO TOM MEYER

It is noon now when I open your book and my thought goes out to where I think you are waiting. The pipe lies beneath the lamp and on the left side of my desk rest those books I've been reading. There is a bird's call somewhere in and through the other day's voices.

I just reached for a match to have the next bowl. But it is a gull who echoes back as I did when I wanted her and a man was in the way between.

Well tell me how this time can go on.
I do not know what she knew.

George Stanley:

(3 poems

IGNORANCE

I, I, I, I--

Sweat blanched on a moving thigh.

There was a god here just now,

Apollo or Hercules. I--

I sent him away, or, rather,

I knew he was on his way, somewhere.

His hairy balls hung over my head, starlight glanced off his
 from the stars that showed when my skull split open like a
 traveling hardnesses.

I am trying to find some way to lie,
tell a lie. Oh, the cock of the god,
the blond cock of the god.

BEAUTY

Beauty is across the lake at the other side of the Universe
I heard.

No astronomer could find her. I saw a picture last night
of Marilyn Monroe. I read it in the newspaper.

We asked each other too if we had written poems for Janis
Joplin.

Oh, the Pegasus blimp Beverly saw riding over Portland,
its red electric wings flapping, legs lifting, head lifting,
mane streaming, is dead; cracked-up tubing, torn foam
rubber,

three blimps left in the world now and they all belong to
Goodyear

and I said:

Maybe it's good, if all the beautiful things
we remember were still around, the world'd be clogged
with beauty,
we'd be...

I didn't finish, meant something like suffocated.
Gene Lesser had just found a piece of shrapnel in his chili.
Smog. Three horse-faced professors, always laughing,
jaws going up and down, it's all working out.
I thought it was up to me to find Beauty.

She...

Oh, let it be, we thought of her, that's enough. Let it be
enough.

She was with us, that way, this afternoon. Do we really
want
legs and arms tight around each other, naked, losing sight
of...

Losing sight, even...

And something, whatever it is, never stops happening...

But if I don't find her,
there'll be less of me to die.

PLEASANT HILL

homage to Robin Blaser

Mammy Pleasant's eucalyptus trees,
eucalyptus meaning "well-hidden."
Well-hidden is the need
that calls to my seed.

Outside the dimension in which we walk
notes of another float and are counted
as sweet-smelling leaves.
Her face

appears at the window of the house in the air
that is not there. Questioning
how far style will take you,
how far you can go until it won't take you. The wind

is in the trees.
A single leaf
lies, drying, on my desk, next to the candles,

under the nose of the bear called California, eucalyptus,
well-hidden.

You turn away from the window.

Is the Universe one fruit

you can get your hands on,

smash through? Can you get your hands on the seeds?

Can you get your hands on the seeds of the Universe,

& fling them to the ground, or fling them to the sky,

& stamp on them there?

There is no inside or outside. There is only

down

into the chicken blood,

and up,

hard as a tree,

hard as my dream of light.

David Bromige:

THE WHITE-TAIL KITE

The penis
straining
with the same
attention

Such is its vantage,
how can it help but
discover
what it needs

Never saw it catch
a single thing in
this field -- yet

time & again it
returns, by its torn
wing identifiable --

the worry over readers --
must be
one place where it feeds

The both of us

so in

in this
perusal
of potential

Filled with
this possibility
of the instant
next to this

Wings raising must
contain implicitly
the movement
consequent

Nailed to the invisible
it cannot
flutter just to
flutter

Fucking just to
fuck -- evokes
that slump that's
subsequent --

thus one
love, one
fucks
to love,

constructs
continuums
for fuck & love to
live among,

I loved everything
with everyone
embedded in it
from the start,

auricle & ventricle
the stories of the heart,
rival
survivals

Time & again I
watched, as though you
came to tell me something,

as though your patience
were a lesson --
but how to think

you patient, or
its opposite, the wings
blur as you focus

One never shall
discover him self
here & now

unless an
elsewhere have
declared its

whereabouts
demanding one
attend, & here

takes care

now of itself,
attending from

I will, I won't --
a kind of nothingness
I guess, although I know

it's air, seeing
how it buffets you
by your adjustments

in the face or
force of it,
supports you there &

thus you hover
& will have to
plunge through

& into it,
to verify
your hope

If the field were
more abundant, or
your kind less so,

still you'd have to hover --
that's what you are,
a harrier,

whatever the conditions that
permit your presence,
this side death, mon frere

Now gone, yet
what you pointed to

in me
stirs in this

field, as an attention
focusses, & thus is

focussed,
here

At last!
these visits &
these visitations come
to roost -- your white

flash, if edged with
black -- & all
falls into place
at the edge of that

intrusion --
again -- the welcome
could be death' s --
you' ve got to be

my habit -- nothing
holds you up --
it' s on such you flutter,
on & off -- no, on

Maybe you' re exhausted,
in an agony of hunger
hanging there, pinioned to

yourself, & the invisible

Your life -- I
cannot save --
registers
a wonder, here --

or I hang
agonized & dumb,
agonized, I mean,
if dumb

Make it of metal --
it doesn't eat what it
soars over, but
disintegrates

what can't be borne
again

Diane Wakoski:

THE JOYFUL BLACK DEMON OF SISTER
CLARA FLIES THROUGH THE MIDNIGHT
WOODS ON HER SNOWMOBILE

Sister, sister,
have I any sisters?

Could I trust a woman to love me
and not to decay into the body odor of an old and failed
personality?

Could there be women who love
and still form the crystals of a beautiful life?
the snow of deep understanding falling
in a mantle around the mountain,
Oh, women, you are such failures, starting with so much
and ending with such mockery

sagging breasts,
painted dry faces
whining voices
broken veins and starched hair
When the beautiful body goes,

snap,

snap,

snap,

the temperament and mind too?

Sister Clara,
you give me hope

that beyond the body is the demon;
beyond the face
is the mind and
the imagination

that we all stamp out in our searches for reality;
 the gleaming shores of paradox
 we long for when middle-age and expensive beach-
 cottages set in,
 deep in your Duluth woods,
 praying on the black rosary which glitters in the moonlight
 16 terrible degrees below zero of a snowing winter
 Minnesota night,
 speaking kindly to the children of the world
 while you dream of Aida's procession marching down
 the aisles of yr mind, elephants and queens
 and Shakespear's Othello, his face, also black against
 the snow
 under your window murmuring poetry no child
 could understand,
 while your dreams of French comedy, Moliere lines
 dancing in black patent leather tap shoes
 trickle cricketing across the table
 and ancient death from a Swedish movie
 whispers, whispers
 and takes you beyond
 the polyanna sweetness of daily words.

Sister Clara,
 the sweet nun who loves poetry,
 no longer wearing a habit, after 19 years in the nunnery,
 blue eyes assuring your students that you will take each care
 seriously,
 curly auburn hair reminding them of the innocence of nature,
 a heavy body needing to be shaken by love, from its casing,
 a house covered by snow,
 unoccupied,
 waiting for spring to melt it out, or someone to own it,
 heat it, keep it dug out in winter,

Sister Clara,
 the nun who dedicated yourself to god when you were 12
 and god was a dark skier on some distant slope,
 tall, Minnesotan,

never speaking, shaking the snow off his woolen cap,
his goggles protecting the eyes from white-blindness

Sister, sister, I ask myself,
have I any sisters in this world?
Any women who understand the tears that have run down my
belly, and streaked it with red scars,
who also understand the beauty of men, even with
their broken promises,
and the drabness of women,
Sister Clara, in your dumpy grey wool dress
the thin orange scarf at your throat
which reminds me of your story,
could you be my sister?
my reminder of humanity, deeper, blacker earth than my own?
your story like a potato dug out of it?
or the iron ore dumped into the freighters in frozen Lake
Superior?

Mother,
I reject,
Sister,
I've also rejected,
Brother,
I've looked for,
Father,
I've lamented,
Husband,
I've found?

always the question
after satisfaction.

Timber,
grain,
iron ore,
the wealth of northern Minnesota,
the birch groves sloping down the hills to the shores of what?
frozen harbor to the world,
white fields of water,

winter prisons for the giant freighters,
 disguised fluid that carries out the wealth,
 Sister Clara,
 you were less disguised in your black habit,
 your white coif around a face so honest it could blind
 even the snow.

We turned you out into this grey dress,
 liberated you from children to books,
 gave you poetry that the clacking black beads cannot drown
 out. And your demon appeared to me then,
 a black woman wailing on the sand dunes,
 a black heron flying out of the marsh with a long
 dead snake,
 the pearls out of milky oysters, charred tumbling
 from a fire,
 burning into a room in a mountain,
 slivers of glass needled into the eyes of all woman,
 a tree blowing down in a storm,
 the sound of waves in deep winter,
 the black wool being wound by cactus-faced women,
 black scarves on the women in mourning,
 black candles burned on a white altar,
 black hair on a drowned sailor,
 the black queen of spades who foretells yr death,
 the demon behind your blue eyes
 in innocent Minnesota winter,
 crackled,
 while you praised and praised and smiled and smiled,
 and loved and loved
 and all this white surface only reflected the wintery blackness
 of the deep aching inside,

Sister Clara,
 wasting yourself on the myth of women and children
 when the innocent god is the betrayer,
 the dark skier, the black priest,
 the dark iron man and the pale white musical woman
 who follows him,

waiting for the strong powerful words,
 the words that women are not supposed to speak,
 that their painted exteriors forbid them from hearing
 for fear of cracking paint,
 eroding walls
 running mascara

that their breasts spouting milk drown out in false whiteness
 that their broken veins no longer can hold back the force of,
 sisters, sisters,
 how you betray life,
 the dark and white of it,
 and the real women

 burning, poisoning their own children
 to reject the false and weak shabby idols
 they might become

Sister Clara listening behind your books,
 their thin rustling pages edged with gold,
 speaking to you of faith and the faithful,
 listening to a priest say he loves you,
 the oldest story in the world,
 the innocence of the newly loved
 and the new lover,

black priest, black nun,
 white priest, white nun,
 their dark shoes hiding the whitest of toes,
 the scriptures crackling over white breasts
 and the penis glowing like a sacramental glass of wine,
 Sister Clara praying over this deep ruby light,
 Sister Clara at night wondering who god is and why,
 in the snowy light he appears and disappears, as a skier,
 up and down curving slopes,
 is seen and lost again to the distant observer,
 Sister Clara feeling the love for this man who would be with
 her every night, whose hands would touch her everyday-new
 hair as if blessing a reformed sinner,
 Sister Clara thinking of her 19 years in the airy arms of god
 and the aching body which every year put on a tiny new
 layer of fat, to try to make up for the substance of love

which was not there,
 Sister Clara thinking of her commitments and how a rose
 might look growing in the snow
 in the dead of winter, red,
 like wine
 like the cup, the cock,
 the lips, dark & full, which would press against her
 and the poetry which would melt her down to the bone of coral
 and the mountain full of iron,
 rough
 and the steel it might become.
 Sister Clara,

her thoughts in her hands like coral and bone of
 pearl deciding to leave her god her calling her sisters her
 beads her books made of the feathers of birds,
 deciding in the dark night without demons
 with only the wisdom of love
 which goes beyond books.

Sister Clara choosing the one man to betray her,
 the one man to eat dozens of oysters for dinner and heap
 their pearly shells beside his plate,
 the dark skier on the slopes appearing and reappearing
 as the telephone
 black with the orders of a new god
 ringing and ringing,
 the ex-priest, her lover through the veils of eyelids
 and a cup of wine drunk from some marshy flower,
 that telephone ringing
 every night in her dreams,
 in dormitories filled with girls and nuns,
 Ringing black telephone,
 heavy slender cradle to the mouth
 "I've found another woman,
 I could not wait..."

19 years she waited for her lover
 but the skier disappeared on the slopes,

and she sees him below in the ski lodge drinking hot wine
with a girl he's met that afternoon

The betrayal.

It is the story of her religion,
a man betrayed by his lovers and followers
but she a woman
has never been permitted to live the black night
of this betrayal
and as a woman
knows there is no white-lighted day to follow the death,
but more black more darkness more nights
where the books are dry with dust,
and the candles sputter,
the wine dries out of the cup,
and the jewels are cold ugly minerals,
the rose does not bloom in the snow
the black wailing women from Egypt
the herons from Southern marshes
the coral from a cool deep clear sea
are mirages
the blinding white fields and hills of snow are permanent,
never ending
a winter she must try to whisper through
with poetry
song
and prayer beads beyond human passion.

This nun of 19 years,
serious devoted
but above all a woman
was willing to leave her god her church her religion
for a man
an ex-priest
who wanted to marry her,
and then he ran off
like a playboy
with another woman.

In her winter
she must try to whisper.

The demon is a poetry from the past
that I would whisper to her.

The demon of Sister Clara could be there to rescue her.
I see the beauty of mahogany shining out of her eyes,
I see her climbing into her black snow mobile, racing
through the black black night
racing with the wind reddening her face to the colour of wine,
the snow glinting with moonlight,
its desperate silence telling her not to listen for god in
the narcissistic chatter of children,
telling her to leave the noble cold climate,
telling her there are no answers,
tantalizing her with the image of a red rose growing in the
snow, giving her the means of transport
to race above the crippling snow,
giving her the winter motorcycle,
the vehicle that denies limitations,
the speed that love once glowed into her cheeks.

Sister Clara,
I see you racing through the Minnesota mountain night
in your snowmobile
made from pages of poetry
with arias and chorales as runners,
and a bloody rose
thorns surrounding the red tip
replacing the moon in this sky.

The man who betrayed you
opened his book to the wrong place.
When he turns the page
he will find your name spoken,
his hands will turn black and his beads crumble like dust in
them. You will be the woman
so few women are,

the sister
 reminding us of why we love those men,
 our betrayers,
 the sister whose beauty grows
 rather than diminishes
 with a crumbling face.
 You will stop watching the disappearing skier
 and will open the black book to your own name.

Sister, sister
 don't let us listen to false visions of ourselves.
 We have in common
 the symbols of our betrayals --
 the rose
 the cry in the night
 the ringing telephone.

"Remarkable"

A collection of
 new poems by
 NATHANIEL
 TARN

A NOWHERE FOR VALLEJO

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RANDOM HOUSE



Kenneth Irby:

JED SMITH AND THE WAY

So we came to Oregon
 like Jedediah Smith in 1828 -- from California
 and after furs -- in his case, pelts
 in ours, the fur in furriners
 and an eye on the nap of the land

*

Smith came north up the Sacramento Valley from his winter
 camp
 and traversed the Trinity Mts at some point, probably the
 Trinity R. valley
 to bring him to the mouth of the Klamath 8 Jun 1828
 missing Humboldt Bay, it was 1850 before white men found,
 among them
 Josiah Gregg, of The Commerce of the Prairies, who was in
 the next party behind Smith and Sublette's
 on the Santa Fé Trail that fatal May of 1831 when Smith met
 his
 digging a water hole in the Cimarron sands, Comanches
 ambushed him
 he took 3 of, including the chief, before he fell
 but his (and Sublette's) smart already had become a careless
hubris on that whole sashay southwest, figuring
 having been king men of the Far West fur trade they could
 make the Santa Fé route
 without a guide, lost the trail, ran out of water, and Smith
 went off alone to find

We drove straight up the Valley, carrying the magnet in us
Shasta is the polestone for

Did Jedediah see that mount before he turned west to the
ocean?

was that singular beauty still a notch in his head

3 years later in Kansas, steering for those

Twin Spanish Breasts of Wah-to-Yah, also snowed and
dominators?

Shasta and Shastina look like one from the north
rising unaccompanied and without challenger except the head
from that stage plain

crown you carry in your head to go on into Oregon, that
birchbark

bowl they always said it was, lined with fur

Jed knew even then was where the nooky

of the coast from Nootka to San Gabriel

most lay

Shannon and I had a plan not just in mind that was

to yield home again, fresh again

drive into land and know this was the spot to take us in

Kansas always promised and demanded there must be, it

wasn't, you must find, the plains

demand a lot that way and I wonder what

of that incessant rimless bowl Jed

fed most on carrying after all

all of California Oregon and the way anyone got there first

tight under his cap

what kind of the loneliness

or was it all too close a care

on those endless nowhere buffalo trails

to cut past God the Bible and the Methodist Illumination and

Warming Within where did he find that?

did McLoughlin bring it forth, buying off those furs

and feting him and his survivors in Fort Vancouver's

imperial splendor?

We were planning for time's sake, though
 which is to say only a long weekend from Berkeley to Tide-
 water and back
 and whichaway to take the coast in
 in daylight -- not the season's

so we came back the way Smith went up
 pivoting a reversal
 or an alteration of highs

up 101 to Eugene, through Ashland, that "sweet little town"
 in the pale night of almost summer solstice
 stopped at Roseburg the allnight coffee shop a 48 Roadmaster

On to Alaska

uncertain why we didn't if all home
 we got it out finally the next afternoon in the coast range
 logging stumps to Alsea
 did not ever let up from

time that simple shit
 of an excuse, excuse me please, but
 do you really think you can make it all the way in that old
 Buick?

it seemed certain they would
 I am not certain but that
 the search for home always, if it, falters on that
 first quick rationalized refusal to go on, but if home
 equally must not depend on just one route to get there

for all this roundabout stars remain

*

The Willamette mist hides the hills not heaven
 its persistence to keep quiet through all seasons
 alters the scordatura of the nerves
 as if to be played on here were what we waited for back there

to hear its always-going-on quick glance at firs beyond the
 freeway missed
 the turn to Kimballs' on a hillside below Eugene
 got out of bed at 1 am and brought us beer and stew
 to hear the news

*

And the aftertaste still of the most expensive frenchfries in
 the Valley
 at the Frosty Function in Weed
 made the pie in Roseburg seem extraspecial
 or speaks that the hostiles now
 are aimed inside the stomach not just the pigs
 cruising the parking lot eyeing the Alaska ensemble
 we had left the Indians roused and testy
 back in California, fighting for their Pit River drainage from
 PG&E
 and dealing with Samoan-wielded poolcues in South Mission
 not Oregon

where Jedediah lost all but 3 of his men
 he seems to have had a genius for getting waylaid in places
 otherwise not murderous
 pushing God one wonders as uppity as pushing the Rocky
 Mountain Fur Co.
 the Californios in San Gabriel and Monterey were rightly
 suspicious of this first threat of the overland swarm
 to come
 but were cooled by Yankee skippers who heard Smith's
 headlong push as part of their own big business cum
 Jehovah drive all the way to China
 besides he had a little Latin and some history, knew the
 Good Book well, stood 6' 2"
 and had a smooth, one guesses, though taciturn tongue . . .
 guess work . . . like our fidgettings
 of Wilbur Stump at the piano bar in Crescent City

just with his name become an intimate of the journey

*

All this selvedge of the continent stuff, the shifts
still demanding, the routes up and down the coast . . .

the constantly shifting homesteads, the seeking up and down
the same, demanding routes and watersheds
avoiding the logging, trying to ignore it (hard or hardly), or
like

Charlie working it for a while, looking all the while
elsewhere, into the wood, or at the bubbles on the stream by
or the rapt, dulled awareness of stiff muscles after choker
setting

"all I did every night was come home, eat, and go to sleep,
and I couldn't even do that till Anne massaged me loose"
rapt ingots of the rus

looking, looking, moving, searching
up and down the coast routes, looking
the landscape ache in the restless eye
landscape queers
seeking with a keyhole gimlet eye under the fire of heaven
for home as if that lover were some place they'd never
been before

*

So the country south of Philomath
looked Kansas, that is, childhood, promised
all again, the learning loved
is what is brought to an unpredictable
road junction question and answer . . .

The soul of another
 of one dead, what lasts after
 and makes us remember
 where will I meet again
 my dog Oscar, dead since summer
 1944

is that what Olson meant
men are known only in memory?

for the past participle
 coupled with the present copula

.

. . . fixes

turkey buzzards over a farmhouse
 south of Alsea
 and where will you go
 when the crackdown reaches for your ass
 Shannon's girlfriend said
 "the sea"

which is not home
 but maybe origin, she didn't mean
 to switch her street for its
 to live on, the question
 for that answer, is
 where do you go now

on a logging road in Oregon
 between two families of friends

*

Smith said he went West not so much for beaver as for "the
 novelty of the thing"
 not that he neglected the beaver, but --
 the Californios through he must be some kind of officer in

disguise

not but that his reports did go straight to General William
Clark

when Smith returned (in Clark's letterbook now in the Kansas
Historical Soc.)

but novelty one feels was hardly the only drive

and God was in there driving, but the push

that all those Yankee skippers heard, whatever Smith was
by himself, his crew were greedy

brutal motherfuckers, and though he flogged a few for getting
out of hand, still

the lot of them had spread the word of fear and cruelty
for weeks ahead of them, those Kalliwakset on the Umpqua
knew long before the white eyes came

they were a hard, rapacious, horny lot

and though Smith protested after the event, they'd done
nothing really

to antagonize the Indians, or not that much

Simpson to the Hudson's Bay Co. directors' lowed as how
they had

camped on the Umpqua near the present Smith,

Smith called the Defeat, River

and with the Kalliwakset gathered, but wary, to trade their
beaver

the Yankees missed a skinning knife and a hatchet, seized
the man suspected

bound and beat him, till he confessed, told where they were
buried in the sand

"stiff punishment for such a slight offense" Simpson reported
right then and there the Kalliwakset would have retaliated,
but one powerful chief still voted for restraint

till he, fancying a ride on Harrison Rogers, Smith's chief
clerk, 's choice steed

was ordered down at gunpoint after a circuit of the camp
and that, as Lord Buckley said, do it, and the Indians

snapped --

Smith

was reconnoitering the trail ahead with 2 other trappers and
 a guide
 they missed the massacre by ditching the Indian guide and
 swimming to safety
 of the 17 men left with the Kalliwakset, one got out alive,
 Arthur Black
 later Smith's companion on the return to the States
 skipped to the woods and made it to Ft Vancouver on his own
 joined later by Smith and Turner and Delano, all laying their
 sad story
 on McLoughlin, chief king pin factor of the western coast
 (who, wasting a season's expedition of his own, even got
 their furs back for them
 bought them, "most miserable" furs he'd ever seen, and
 sent these Americans on their way back home)

near Reedsport, on the Umpqua, 14 July 1828, still today a
 furry country, though
 as the joke goes, now Douglas, instead of beaver

*

We drove past the house and U-turned
 east, met the women setting out on foot for Tidewater
 2 miles off a store and gas pumps
 pulled in the driveway and found Charlie in the doorway
 eating grainola "I've just come off a fast"
 and we with profligates' complete sashay
 set brandy on the table and slapped down the grass

*

A man wants refuse from the shit
 other men push on him -- so pushes on
 but Smith carried as much of that along with him
 as 18 trappers and say 300 mules and horses
insure -- no wonder the Indians
 knew they were coming for 2 weeks in advance

and behind them must have stretched a swath of shit
 20 yards wide across all of northern California for all
 Smith was a cautious, wily, knowing mountain man -- for
 after all
 it was a business, and big, and the land
 (and the Indians, "brutish, subhuman" lot that they were)
 could take it . . .

.

In his kit he always carried
 a mirrored dressing case with drawers
 kept cleanshaven trimmed his hair
 seized the locks of time
 from first we know
 came down from winter in Illinois
 to answer Ashley's ad
 St Louis Feb or Mar 1822 set out
 May up river with the rest
 to meet the 'Rees
 and make his name

*

Holderlin called the lyric
 "the continuous metaphor of a feeling"
 the epic, "the metaphor of an
 intellectual point of view"
 this is the discontinuous
 narrative of a journey, dendritic
 a form of pasture, anabasis and return
 pastoral in that
 "sluicing" meaning the juice
 runs down over the head
 and puddles off the fingers

.

So the Alsea valley where the Vermonts are
 narrows between the river and the highway 200 yards
 and the cut of the hills up instantly with Douglas fir
 shoulders that waist in left and right
 there is the cork of the mind
 set tight

.

The student quoted

"Wo Lun has ways and means
 To insulate the mind from all thoughts.
 When circumstances do not react on the mind
 The Bodhi tree will grow steadily."

The master replied

"Hui Neng has no ways and means
 To insulate the mind from all thoughts.
 Circumstances often react on my mind,
 And I wonder how can the Bodhi tree grow?"

.

So it is that footsteps on a Berkeley street
 will set the foxglove and the blackberry thick along the road
 again
 someone will answer from the river
 and the heart will come unlocked

*

Ribbons of Oregon, rivers
 of affection, back doors brimming
 swimming naked, each day
 a baptism, each dripping a return
 to the first emergence from the belly

from the continent before our continent
 friendship realizing again
 the rising of this shelf of Oregon
 from the Cretaceous waters

each day down to the river
 to intimacy away from the too close
 intimacy inside the house
 down from the mountain
 to join the salamanders
 seeking the fire, the primordial
 the instant, wondrous hairnet

wordless long after sunset
 watching the bubbles passing on the surface

joined in the journey, the lean and the visceral

*

So over these now quiet rusticiencies
 quiet after coming from the cities
 to these narrow valleys, over these
 marginally productive farms, the imminence
 of old aggressions, pushing the Alsea
 and the Kalliwakset under, shucking the land
 of beaver, even before Jedediah
 draining the land of fur, those animals
 never to return, only the logger's
 heart has burned, still burns
 over the second and third growth and quiet
 farms the haze of old old destructions
 the geologic history of rise and fall
 inundation and explosion Mt Mazama's
 blast in recent Pleistocene rocking
 even these distant oceantided streams
 returning solstice setting burning in the windows

*

And so comes the other land
 as a hand of sunlight into the room
 drawing figures on the wall
 of after dark, this Saturday afternoon
 and handsome in the mirror, handsome music
 in the room, come into
 from cleaning up downstairs, or just now
 looking up as under water
 crossing the line to Oregon from California
 into the open, out of the valley
 of mid-July, mid-afternoon, mid-life
 fingers draw figures, first a circle
 then an X, then letters
 that fade before I can read, not
now I hear, a freed inside voice
 then erasing, swipes of the edge of hand
 greasy, across instantly paper I'd been
 uneasy, illatase, completely unsatisfied writing on
 on out of sight, then a knot
 traced and drawn tight, unknotted
 showed a room, a depth opening
 and closing water, a film, blood pumping
 through the eyes, upon a still quiet scene
 of sunlight through the curtains
 and the open window, stirring --

I looked away, I
 couldn't watch, like the death of mother, on the verge
 of some rebirth, but first the rape had to come, and that
 was tied up, tortured, gagged, split open, shoved and stuffed
 up in
 I looked away into the glass of wine
 the focused rays, the geologist's lens
 saying JAPAN reflecting sun
 onto the ceiling --

the scene on the wall passed

I looked back, ashamed I'd looked away
 a tall, still-glowing candle, cock but without balls
 of light, finger, pointed up
 molded to the molding of the wall

.

Ashland Oregon into the dark just saves
 the last light moments to guide us in
 leaving Shakespeare in the leaves
 to hang down over and send on
 by that sweet sound of rushing waters

*

Diah also said he did it
 all for his parents, brothers and sisters
 "It is, that I may be able to help
 those who stand in need, that I face every danger"
 but that was in a remorseful
 Christmas Eve letter to his brother Ralph, 1829
 "I entangle myself altogether
 too much in the things of time"
 filled with common sentiments of Christian humility
 "I hope you will remember me
 before a Throne of Grace"
 the closeness of death, our wicked ways, etc.
 not odd for the time, very odd for a mountain man
 to say, much less write, but Jed
 was not at all ordinaire, amongst a horny cocksman profession
 he never showed any interest in women, wasn't
 gay, probably never got laid, some say
 he was hot for his brother Ralph's wife Louisa
 and never looked at another -- dead serious
 "He may have been entirely humorless" says Morgan
 but very very sharp, an eye
 exact for detail
 (to wit, the description of Ft Vancouver

in the Oct 1830 letter to the Secretary of War)
nobody met him and came away unimpressed
 didn't smoke, didn't drink
 despite the Methodist doubts within, he was
 as the anonymous Eulogy says
 "always confident of success"
 that is, the dedicated guilt-edged Christian businessman
 whose business happened to be
 beavers and the unknown West

*

The last dream a month
 after Tidewater dreamt
 of the opening from California to Oregon
 the single turn to wide
 on open hills that had been clear
 woods suddenly appeared
 older than the hills as Michael
 said the ancient bristlecones
 were here before the rocks were
 but Oregon is softer
 the trees that came and went again
 were tended in a further time
 than Indians or a time
 coterminous but not accessible
 with any ease "You can never get here
 the same way twice, and you always
have to get here, this is the way North and South
 the way East and West
 this is the Secret History of the Continent"

-- Berkeley
 Jun-Jul 70 - Feb 71

Clayton Eshleman:

TRENCHES

At the broken
Emerald,
the Fall
where

man drinks,
woman is slop.
Original Sin
can be located:

the furthest
fallen becomes
the limit of
the fall.

My identity
Gary, is
the pregnant
black

In the totem
 our ancestors perceived
being depends

I worship the buffalo
 because it feeds me

walk out on Ventura Boulevard

I worship woman because I kill her

*

"the other women"
 he said, "the poems to
 other women
 are in a black
 binder in my office"

I was torn between hatred
 for the rot & compassion
 for the man the fix
 he was in, seduced into
 for a moment thinking
 she is a quality of
 mercy in nature, you know
 the girl the stranger finds,
 mistress, as if a cove
 for each turbulent place
 & saw the girl
 in his Net of Lust, at
 3rd Avenue & 7th Street, say

near noon on a wintery morning
 to find her, on her back, knees up in
 a snow drift at the corner smiling
 up at him.

I kept thinking of the black
 binder as bread filled
 with roaches as I sat
 by this bedside

*

Artaud
 his ass split open, now numb, angular as a bony
 dog, in white priest cloak
 the edges of his mouth
 dark with laudanum

*

A negative is soul-destroying
 it is not the shadowed side of a mountain.
 The association of perception
 (this side of the mountain is shadowed)
 with humanity (woman is dark) is
 or seems to be The
 negation, until one realizes man was
 before That association looking to
 justify his feelings that

woman is to serve, is inferior is
 shit he deeply desires. .
 Woman gives birth. There is something
 utterly repulsive to man in that he
 comes out of woman. An endless
 cave. A horror of the dark
 he must identify with the mystery
 of his own shit --

*

Artaud in a café, watching roaches crawl
 out of his dinner

*

I was crouched
 over, shitting. A small
 window thru wch I cld see
 the Petersen's carp pond
 & by it a bank, I got interested
 in the possibility of a conversion,
 I wld flush the benjo & the shit wld
 swirl down into the earth, but when I
 wld hear of it again it, or
 what was on my eyes was a pond
 The strength of the matter seemed to
 congeal in the bank, it seemed
 laced tight with ivy & stringers

trees seemed of its pull
The kinetics of the thing drove me craz
I was in tension, crouched, shitting
The bank was a nexus of energy
As long as I' m here
the bank is an image of Eden

*

Artaud on his back, partially
covered by a dirty sheet, knees raised
giving birth

/13 - 18 September 1971/

Gary Snyder:

(3 poems & a review

LITTLE DEAD KIDS BUTTS

You goodnatured American boys
 shooting down villagers
 papa-sans
 children

You shoot them with rifles
 The whole body jerks.
 You don't even eat them,
 You let the flesh rot.

My little boys have black hair.

The doe.
 Someone left wounded
 I shot between the eyes
 one eye bulges out
 the whole body jerks.

Gen, born the same evening
 in warm blood,
 in soft meat,
 the placenta
 eases out after;
 holding Masa's hand tight --

Back to cutting up the doe.
 We will take her life back to the hills
 To run with her, sniff with her,

On the same lands with her
in us --

My two little boys, their
meat bodies,
fat thighs,
Like the fat little butts of
dead children in photos

I won' t have them wasted.

The dead doe,
The dead Vietnamese baby
Gen being born
Kai' s bare butt in the garden,

We can live with death, meat, and blood

So if you come near my children
With "orders"
Your "orders" your
Limp-cock shitting-tongue
Trigger-finger "orders"

I' ll kill you
Soldier

And dress out your meat.

CHARMS

for Michael McClure

The beauty of naked or half-naked women,
 lying in nothing clear or obvious -- not
 in exposure; but a curve of the back or arm,
 as a dance or -- evoking "another world"

"The Deva Realm" or better, the Delight
 at the heart of creation.

Brought out for each mammal species
 specifically -- in some dreamlike perfection
 of name-and-form

Thus I could be devastated and athirst with longing
 for a lovely mare or lioness, or lady mouse,
 in seeing the beauty from THERE
 shining through her, some toss of the whiskers
 or grace-full wave of the tail

that enchants.

enchants, and thus

CHARMS.

THE BATH

Washing Kai in the sauna,
 The kerosene lantern set on a box
 outside the ground-level window,
 Lights up the edge of the iron stove and the
 washtub down on the slab
 Steaming air and crackle of waterdrops
 brushed by on the pile of rocks on top
 He stands in warm water
 Soap all over the smooth of his thigh and stomach
 "Gary don't soap my hair!"
 -- his eyesting fear --
 the soapy hand feeling
 through and around the globes and curves of his body
 up in the crotch,
 And washing-tickling out the scrotum, little anus,
 his penis curving up and getting hard
 as I pull back skin and try to wash it
 Laughing and jumping, flinging arms around,
 I squat all naked too,
 is this our body?

Sweating and panting in the stove-steam hot-stove
 cedar-planking wooden-bucket water-splashing
 kerosene lantern-flicker wind-in-the-pines-out
 sierra forest ridges night --
 Masa comes in, letting fresh cool air
 sweep down from the door
 a deep sweet breath
 And she tips him over gripping neatly, one knee down,
 her hair falling hiding one whole side of
 shoulder, breast, and belly,

Washes deftly Kai's head-hair
as he gets mad and yells,

The body of my lady, the winding valley spine,
the space between the thighs I reach through,
cup her curving vulva arch and hold it from behind,
a soapy tickle; a hand of grail;
The gates of Awe I dream of,
That lead up in beyond the time,
That open back a turning double-mirror world of
wombs in wombs, in rings,
that start in music,
is this our body?

The hidden place of seed
The veins net flow across the ribs, that gathers
milk and peaks up in a nipple -- fits our mouth --
The sucking milk from this our body sends through
jolts of love, the son, the father,
sharing mother's joy,
That brings a softness to the flower of the awesome
open curling lotus gate I cup and kiss
As Kai laughs at his mother's breast he now is weaned
from; we
wash each other,
this our body

Kai's little scrotum up close to his groin, the
seed still hid, that moved from us to him,
In flows that lifted with the same joys forces
as his nursing Masa later,
playing with her breast,
Or me within her, swelling loving cock,
Or him emerging,
Masa and myself hand-holding;
Or Masa and me standing naked kissing, Kai
enters through our legs

and draws his hand across my penis,
 wraps his arm through Masa's hip
this is our body:

Clean, and rinsed, and sweating more, we stretch
 out on the redwood benches hearts all beating
 Quiet to the simmer of the stove,
 the scent of cedar,
 And then turn over,
 murmuring gossip of the grasses,
 talking firewood,
 Wondering how Gen's napping, how to bring him in
 soon wash him too --
 These boys who love their mother
 who loves men, who passes on
 her sons to other women;

The cloud across the sky the windy pines
 the trickle gurgle in the swampy meadow,

this is our body.

Fire inside and boiling water on the stove
 We sigh and slide down from the benches
 wrap the babies, step outside,

The cold air of the stars.

Pour cold water on the back and thighs
 Go in the house
 Stand steaming by the center fire
 Kai scampers on the sheepskin
 Gen standing hanging on and shouting

"Bao! bao! bao! bao! bao! bao!"

This is our body. drawn up crosslegged by the flames

drinking icy water
hugging babies, kissing bellies,

Laughing on the Great Earth

Come out from the bath.

* * * * *

Philip Whalen. On Bear's Head (New York: Harcourt Brace
& World and Coyote, 1969) 406 pages. \$17.50

Gathered from the books Like I Say / Memoirs of an Inter-
glacial Age / Braincandy / Every Day / Vanilla / The
Winter. Poems from 1950 (Portland Oregon) to 1966 (Kyoto
Japan.) (The book is weirdly over-priced, but there is a
paperback out, so buy it.)

Philip Whalen is one of my oldest friends; when I was
nineteen and we were living in the same basement he intro-
duced me to Indian Philosophy. Phil and Alison and I played
Mah Jong until dawn and ate horsemeat for breakfast. Re-
reading these poems is like being half in my own head; Phil-
ip's voice inside me, speaking whenever I stop to hear it.

The title: The Bear is Philip, as he plays the part of
the ceremonial bear of the circum-polar bear cult, in his
life. What comes from that head is oracular, but in a nat-
ural way: ordinary utterances are strangely prophetic. Wha-
len has successfully slipped through & by two dangers of (1)
being a poet writing masterpieces, and (2) being a prophet or
seer writing arcane wisdom. This leaves him fully in the
human realm (the only realm from which Enlightenment is

possible) -- free to pursue his own way.

The Way that emerges is classical, archaic, devotion-
al, and extremely demanding. Classical because it knowingly
draws on the self-conscious richness of cultural traditions
both eastern and western; archaic in its profound connection
with the underlying un-civilized realm of basic myth and naked
shamanistic or visionary experience; devotional in its spec-
ific recognition of a known tutelary and protective figure, the
Great Goddess the west calls Muse, and named, accurately and
intentionally by Whalen, in her Vajrayana form -- Tara,
Mother of the Buddhas; demanding in that the inner dedication
to this way requires living (as Don Juan put it) "deliberately"
and the outer style imposes poverty.

See these elements at work in the poem "Sanjusangendo":

KWANNON, (sine qua non)

planted in perfect order

11, 000 arms, a tree (Ygdrasil)

with its many twigs, forks,

branch probability world systems

leafy universes, leaves that

BOOK, strung up (Sutra)

each flower a face a throne a palace

Wherein dwells that Lady,

Mistress of the Bees, flower heaven

Paradise, scilicet, an orchard possibly

Within walls

Upon which the Sacred Maze carved painted

(Mandala)

The trip, the map of the voyage, in case anyone
wanted to go

Threads running through all the poems. He views from
various angles his poverty and hunger. Considers, with hu-
mor, the various sides of his renunciation. Invokes the Muse
as human lover, as the bringer of poetry, or the teacher of
Wisdom. And, the seen world as a jewel-world, a universe
of jewels and flowers. Brother Whalen has seen this other

universe -- the "jewel mirror samadhi" a few times, doubt it not.

" To My Muse

Now I see my part in the story:
 Tithonus, immortal & wrinkling
 greying and fading, voice
 from a big pot,
 A seashell echo, prophesying

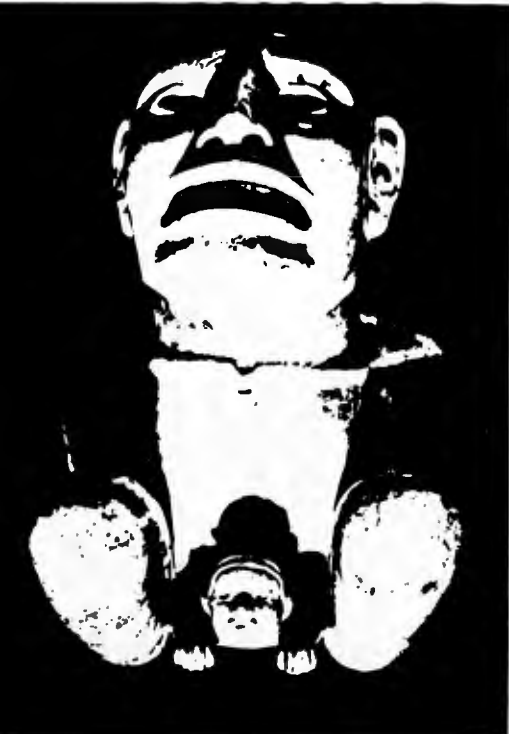
and you pink sunrise, Eos, ever young
 opening."

It is interesting how he moves from Oregon, and the family, the old timey "native folk speech" through San Francisco and finds in Kyoto such another -- different -- but totally solid place to stand. All kinds of new growth-shoots are there in the last poems, The Winter, drawn from his years in Japan.

" Now here' s Kyoto Shirakawa the white river again
 Flows out of my skull, white sandy ashes of my
 parents
 Water ouzel, dragonfly, crawfish
 Blazing trout and bright carnelian jewels
 Never so near, never so far from home."

Here I wish to confess how Philip Whalen has helped me. Many times over the last 12 years when in danger of falling totally into scholarship or becoming somebody' s research appendage, I' ve saved myself, returned myself to poetry, by recollecting the phrase " You do the translations, I can sing." I had come to think that this was from some ancient master as I drew on it through the years. Reading On Bear' s Head

I re-discover it as Philip's, the poem "The Slop Barrel" from 1956. Nine Bows to you, dear comrade.



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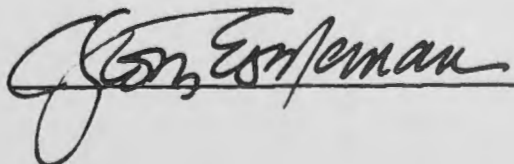
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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Clayton Eshleman", written over a horizontal line.

When in Eternity Man converses with Man they enter
Into each others Bosom (which are Universes of Delight)
In mutual interchange. and first their Emanations meet
Surrounded by their Children. if they embrace & comingle
The Human Four-fold Forms mingle also in thunders of
Intellect

But if the Emanations mingle not: with storms & agitations
Of earthquakes & consuming fires they roll apart in fear
For Man cannot unite with Man but by their Emanations
Which stand both Male & Female at the Gates of each
Humanity

How then can I ever again be united as Man with Man
While thou my Emanation refusest my Fibres of dominion.
When Souls mingle & join thro all the Fibres of Brotherhood
Can there be any secret joy on Earth greater than this?

William Blake, JERUSALEM, Plate 88